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CAMPBELL'S PURITAN IN HOLLAND, ENGLAND AND AMERICA.¹

THOUGH the general scope of Mr. Campbell's book is clear enough, yet he cannot be said to have stated with scientific precision either the theory against which he is arguing or that which he proposes to put in its place. He finds that previous writers have assigned to the political institutions and to the moral and intellectual life of the United States an English origin. This theory he opposes, arguing that Holland rather than England is the parent of the United States. The influence of Holland on America, he contends, was twofold : first, direct, through the foundation of New York, and through immigration to the United States; second, indirect, through the Puritanism of early New England, which, he holds, was mainly Dutch.

Mr. Campbell after all is not severed by an absolute gulf from the predecessors against whom he argues. No sane man would deny that Dutch influence, working as he suggests, has counted for something in determining the character of the United States. Even Mr. Campbell would hardly deny that the founders of Virginia, of Plymouth and of Massachusetts took out something which was proper to them as Englishmen, something which has had an effect on the lives of their descendants. The question really is : What is the extent to which each of the two forces in question has acted ? This from its very nature is not a question which can be answered with scientific exactness. The fusion of elements in national life is chemical, not mechanical. To ask which of the characteristics of modern America are of Dutch origin, which are of English, which have been developed by special conditions of life (the possibility of this third class does not seem to occur to Mr. Campbell), is rather like asking whether the rocks, the sky, the trees or the water have most to do with determining the character of a landscape. A nation's life is an organic whole, not a patchwork. Nevertheless, there is no doubt room for good historical work in tracing the origin and course of particular institutions. And it may be that those laborious and scholarly writers who have endeavored to show how

¹ *The Puritan in Holland, England and America.* By Douglas Campbell. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1892. — Two vols.

English land tenure and local government have lived on in America, have exaggerated their case. Dutch institutions and ideas may have survived more largely and played a more important part in America than has been commonly thought. There is plenty of scope for an able and learned writer in examining these questions.

A work on the lines thus suggested might have been of great interest and profit. Unfortunately it is at once manifest that Mr. Campbell has not the knowledge required and that he has a most inadequate conception of the nature of historical evidence and historical research. It is plain that he formed his conclusions at a very early stage of his studies and that he has since followed up the matter not as an inquirer but as an advocate. He shows no anxiety to sift facts and discriminate between authorities. Modern writers are quoted as if they were contemporaries. And even in his study of modern writers, Mr. Campbell seems almost to have confined himself to those whose conclusions agree with his own.

The work begins with a short sketch of the economic and social condition of England at the present day. Here the author deals with his subject in a fashion which, to say the least, does not inspire one with confidence. When he says (vol. i, p. 13) that in England the church "is supported by a tax levied on every one," we rub our eyes and wonder whether Mr. Campbell has ever heard of the abolition of church rates. Equally astounding is one of his statements as to the cause of the present English land system. "The ruling classes," he tells us, "have refused to sell land to the poor." An interview with a land agent, a visit to a land auction market, would probably open Mr. Campbell's eyes. The general condemnation of the land and church systems in England may be right; but there are certainly two sides to the question. The one thing which a wise man will not do is to assume with Mr. Campbell that all the truth lies on one side and dogmatize accordingly.

Mr. Campbell traces the course of the Protestant movement during the sixteenth and a part of the seventeenth century in England and in the Netherlands. An Englishman is naturally better able to judge of the former part of the work. It is not an exaggeration to say that Mr. Campbell has not brought forward a single new fact or original inference. Everything that he has to tell us is to be found in such easily accessible writers as Hallam and Froude. Mr. Campbell has not even been at the trouble of verifying their statements by any reference to original authorities. One cannot perhaps better illustrate the character of his work than by one or two of the pitfalls

into which he has thus been led. He tells us (vol. i, p. 453) that Parker "accumulated an enormous fortune by wholesale corruption," and that "*among other things*, he *established* a fixed tariff for the sale of benefices" (the italics are mine). For this startling charge of wholesale simony Mr. Campbell refers us to Froude, volume xi, page 100. The only authorities which Mr. Froude gives us are two state papers. One is a financial statement of the condition of the revenues of Canterbury, drawn up a year after Parker's death and endorsed by Grindal. It is there stated, without any implication of blame, that Parker annulled all the dispensations granted by Pole and issued fresh ones. The other document is a resolution of the privy council abolishing dispensations. This Mr. Froude says was "evidently directed at Parker's practices." The evidence, however, Mr. Froude does not adduce. The expression, too, "Parker's practices" is somewhat invidious. Even on Mr. Froude's showing, there is not a tittle of evidence to prove that Parker "established" anything. No doubt the system of dispensations was a thoroughly bad one. No doubt Parker accepted it as part of the machinery which he found in existence and did not reform it. How far a man is to blame for not taking in hand a particular reform, is a question which can only be judged by reference to his whole career and circumstances. But there is a wide difference between a man who as an official acquiesces in a corrupt system, and a man who, as Mr. Froude implies and Mr. Campbell states, devises a corrupt system for his own personal emolument. Mr. Campbell might have reflected that if Parker had really practised wholesale corruption, and if the dispensation system as described was only one "*among other things*," some trace would be visible in the controversial literature of the age — a literature to which Parker's enemies contributed largely — and so experienced an advocate as Mr. Froude would not have had to build his case on two documents written after Parker's death.

In another place Mr. Campbell is led astray by his unquestioning reliance on Hallam. We are told (vol. i, p. 470) that Whitgift "was ignorant, probably not even knowing Greek." But Mr. Campbell must have known that Whitgift was Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge and lectured on the Apocalypse, and one might have thought it strange that a divine of any distinction should have been such a thorough-paced impostor as Whitgift was on this showing. If Mr. Campbell had sifted the case with ordinary care, he would have found that Hallam's authority was the editor of the *Biographia Britannica*, Kippis, who was born in 1715. Kippis's words are :

"His [Whitgift's] learning seems confined to the Latin language, as Hugh Broughton often objected to him." Now if Broughton be good as a witness against Whitgift, he is good as a witness for him. When Broughton was engaged in a controversy with Reynolds on the nature of Christ's descent into hell, he voluntarily chose Whitgift as one of the arbitrators to whom the controversy might be referred. The fact is that Broughton was a very learned, very dogmatic and somewhat wrong-headed controversialist. If Mr. Campbell knows anything of the literary history of the sixteenth century, he must know that differences of opinion as to the value of a preposition or the position of an accent often gave occasion for charges far heavier than that of mere ignorance. We may be pretty sure that if Broughton did charge Whitgift with ignorance of Greek, he only meant that they differed as to the interpretation of certain passages. In any case, however, Mr. Campbell might have settled the question by a very simple test. If he had turned to Whitgift's own published writings, he could scarcely have gone through a hundred pages without finding ample proof that the writer knew Greek. Whitgift may have been wrong-headed and ill-judging as an ecclesiastical politician; but they must have a very high standard of scholarship who deny him the title of a learned man.

Hallam and Froude are not the only authorities whom Mr. Campbell follows. He relies not a little on Mr. Hubert Hall's *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, a book published in 1886. Mr. Hall is an antiquary of considerable learning. He is also evidently a man with exceedingly strong views as to the morality of the Reformers and of those who followed in their steps. He avowedly writes as an advocate. But the fact that he never cites a single reference or gives the reader any opportunity of testing his statements, puts him out of court as a serious witness. He might no doubt be a suggestive guide to any one who followed up his line of research independently. It is, however, but just to Mr. Hall to say that he makes no claim to the sort of authority which Mr. Campbell gives him. He frankly admits in his preface: "I have followed my personal inclinations in the historical coloring of my materials." And this is the writer whom Mr. Campbell quotes as one might quote Thucydides on the Syracusan expedition, or the Wellington Despatches on the Peninsular War.

As to his general estimate of the English Puritans and their opponents, I would only say this: Mr. Campbell throughout writes as if the rulers of the church were fighting against the existence

of Calvinistic doctrine and that absence of ritual which usually accompanied such doctrine, as things which might be tolerated within the church. He forgets that the Puritans, fully as much as their opponents, were fighting not for toleration, but for dominion. That really was the strength of the position of Parker and Elizabeth. They had at their back a mass of people who cared little about doctrine and had no enthusiastic devotion to Anglican ritual, but who at an early stage of the conflict clearly perceived, what later events amply proved, that the little finger of the presbyters would be thicker than the loins of the bishops.

When Mr. Campbell crosses the Atlantic he fares somewhat better. He has no doubt succeeded in showing that many good things which the citizens of the United States enjoy, judicial, forensic and administrative, are not of English origin. He has also shown, and this is the best and most original part of his work, that there is at least a strong presumption that many of these good things came from Holland. To discriminate carefully between the Dutch and the English elements in American jurisprudence and American institutions and in the conceptions which have animated those institutions, would have furnished scope for a very interesting work. Yet I venture to think that such a work would have needed greater gifts of historical investigation and greater power of weighing evidence than are manifested by Mr. Campbell; nor need it have been encumbered, as Mr. Campbell's work is, by an epitome of such a well-known writer as Motley.

There is one of Mr. Campbell's claims which he may I think be fairly asked to abate. He thinks that it is to the example of the Netherlands that the American nation owes its republican form of government. But in fact the founders of the federal republic had no other form of government open to them. Monarchy was too deeply tainted with evil associations to be thought of. George III had a far larger share than the founders of the Dutch Republic in making the United States republican. No doubt Holland furnished a very valuable example of federalism. But on the other hand we must remember that the system of an executive head and two chambers was one with which almost every state was practically familiar in its own local constitution. It is a matter of historical evidence that those constitutions were in their original form framed by Englishmen, and it is a matter of almost certain inference that the framers were largely influenced by the example of the mother country. And as to Mr. Campbell's main contention, one is tempted to say: *Quis*

negaverit? What school of writers have ever held that Americans were nothing more than transplanted Englishmen? No reasonable man can ever have denied that the social, political and intellectual life of America has in it elements other than English. What the New England historians against whom Mr. Campbell seems to protest have emphasized is, the fact that the English colonists who founded New England carried out with them certain institutions which served as a natural and appropriate machinery whereby their political life could develop itself, and whose influence, widening outwards, has done much to affect the political life of the whole republic. And I think few impartial readers will say that Mr. Campbell has overthrown that view.

The best practical test of his theories is the early history of New England and New York. According to Mr. Campbell all that was good in New England Puritanism came originally from Holland. How was it, then, that New Netherland, with pure Dutch institutions and animated by pure Dutch principles, did not far outstrip the diluted imitation? Whether it did so, I leave contentedly to any one who has studied the early life of the Dutch colony in the pages of that singularly laborious and judicious writer, Mr. Brodhead. What had New Netherland, before it became New York, or for half a century after, to set off against the great New England leaders, at once men of learning and men of affairs. When the New England colonies were in all but name self-governing republics, the inhabitants of New Netherland accounted it a triumph if they could wring from their rulers some miserable and transient imitation of popular election. Every New England township had an intense and even exaggerated sense of its own corporate life. New Amsterdam, with its eighteen languages, was a *colluvies omnium gentium*, without cohesion or self-reliance. Compare the docility with which New Netherland acquiesced, first, in English conquest, then in Dutch reconquest, then in restitution, with the vigorous protest of New Haven when she was absorbed by the kindred state of Connecticut. Take again the revolution of 1688. When the people of Massachusetts drove out Andros and were left without a ruler, they at once fell into line as a disciplined and organized community. The people of New York, under like conditions, became a helpless mob and fell under the sway of that shallow and reckless adventurer, Leisler.

Nor can any one read the history of the struggle against the mother country and fail to see that it was the peculiar training of New England which enabled her to stand in the forefront of the bat-

tle. Mr. Hosmer, the biographer of Samuel Adams, does not err when he calls his hero "the man of the town meeting." In Massachusetts every popular feeling, whether begotten of genuine conviction, or stimulated and even created by ambitious and at times unscrupulous leaders, at once found articulate utterance.

Mr. Campbell may perhaps reply that all this was due to the influence of the Puritan founders, and that these founders had learnt such from their Dutch associations and sympathies. I can only answer that it seems paradoxical to say that Holland transmitted to her foreign disciples what she failed to transmit to her own children.

This is far from the same thing as a claim on behalf of New England for high moral or even mental superiority. Throughout her career she has had the defects of her qualities. Her history reveals much that is unlovely, not a little that is culpable. From the days of Endicott to the days of Pickering and the younger Adams, she was narrow, intolerant, unscrupulous with the unscrupulousness of one-sided conviction. But she never lost that self-reliance, that strong sense of corporate life, without which republican institutions are idle forms. So far as the life of the American republic has been animated by these qualities, she owes them largely to New England and to the Englishmen who founded New England.

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